

1 September 1981
MSK-1015

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report--Seoul Bureau--August 1981

I. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

Charges and countercharges between the U.S. and North Korea over U.S. allegations that the North Koreans had fired a missile on 26 August at an SR-71 reconnaissance plane caused a considerable stir within the Embassy and local military commands. The Bureau received numerous phone calls seeking word on North Korea's reaction to the U.S. charge, which was not forthcoming until two days later. Adding to local concern was the fact that the SR-71 issue followed closely on the heels of a rash of incidents along the DMZ, including a South Korean soldier's defection to the North, several firing incidents and the reported overflight of a South Korean island by a North Korean jet. By the end of the month, only limited reaction to the SR-71 incident had been monitored from North Korea.

B. Lateral Services

After seeing several incoming and outgoing FBIS items dealing with North and South Korean military affairs, which added useful information not available from their own sources, the Embassy's Defense Attache's Office (DAO) asked to be placed on regular distribution for such material.

C. Technical

1. During the visit of [] chief of the Field STAT Engineering Branch, Engineering Division, discussions were held with the U.S. 8th Army officer responsible for overseeing the "Fastback" microwave relay project between Pyongtaek and Seoul. The officer foresaw no problems with FBIS' participation in the project, which had been discussed with him several times before. The question of routing the present microwave circuits, including the Bureau's 20 circuits, during the cutover from the present system to the new "Fastback"

system remains to be resolved, but plans are under way to deal with the problem. (It is estimated that it will take 4 to 8 weeks to get the "Fastback" system installed, fully tested and operational once the present system is taken down.) The projected date for the completion of "Fastback" is March 1982.

2. As an interim step to improve the Bureau's microwave circuits pending completion of "Fastback," the military in Pyongyang switched the Bureau's circuits from their rather antiquated cable (designated cable #3) to a better cable (#5) for the feed from the remote receiver site to the Crown microwave relay station at Pyongyang. The new cable should offer much better reliability than the old one, and perhaps some improvement in audio quality.

II. ADMINISTRATION

Personnel

- ✓ 1. Editor [] and family departed on 10 August on PCS assignment back to Washington. STAT
2. Editor [] and Chinese monitor [] were married on 26 August in a ceremony at a Seoul church attended by relatives, friends and virtually the entire Bureau staff. STAT
3. The Embassy received approval from the State Department to increase the local wagescale effective 9 August. The increases in base pay for the various grades range from 14.5 to 22 percent. The miscellaneous fringe benefit portion of the local scale has also been increased by 17 percent. Formal distribution of the new wagescale is expected to be hung up for some time pending resolution of problems with the Embassy's computer, which apparently malfunctioned in trying to compute the new pay levels for each grade.
4. English classes for Bureau employees were resumed on 4 August. All 9 of the Bureau technicians and teletypists are attending a basic class, while 11 of the Bureau's 14 monitors and the Assistant Editor are attending a composition class. The first class runs three days a week and the latter two.

III. VISITS

1. To the Bureau:

Former [] 16-19 August, STAT
on TDY en route back to Washington on PCS assignment.

[] Chief, Field Engineering Branch, STAT
Engineering Division, 20-26 August as part of an
inspection tour of Far East bureaus.

2. From the Bureau:

[] and the Bureau Chief held talks with STAT
Maj. Andrew Iskrzak, 8th Army J-6, on 21 August regarding
FBIS participation in the military's "Fastback" microwave
relay project.

Deputy Chief [] and editor [] attended STAT
a briefing on 27 August at the UN Command's Armistice
Affairs Branch, one of the most avid readers of the Bureau's
file.

[] STAT
Chief, Seoul Bureau, FBIS

Attachments:

Production Reports
Engineering Report

cc: Chief, [] STAT
Chief, Okinawa Bureau
C/Key West Bureau